THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There is no proposal to use global information system. However, Forest Survey of India is using satellite data, Geographic Information System, Global Positioning System and computers for assessment of forests cover of the country biennially.

Lifting of ban on felling trees in Himalayan region

5062. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under consideration of Government for lifting of ban on felling trees for commercial purposes in Himalayan region;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether some people in the region have requested the Government for reconsidering this decision; and

(d) if so, what is Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Government has pronounced the National Forest Policy, 1988 for the conservation and management of forests in the country. The policy in para 4.3.2 envisages that no forest would be permitted to be worked without the Government having approved the management plan. The Government has no proposal to change the policy of working of forests. However, for the State of Himachal Pradesh and the hill regions of the States of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order dated 12th December, 1996 in Civil Writ Petition No. 202/95 has imposed ban on felling of trees in any forest, public or private, except in private plantations and the cutting of trees by right holders for their bonafide personal use. For the north-eastern Himalayan region, the supreme court has endorsed the provision of the National Forest Policy, 1988 for forest working and has directed in its order dated 15.1.1998 in the above matter that the forest working shall be carried out strictly in accordance with working plan prepared by the State Government and approved by the Central Government.

(c) and (d) Government have not received any request in this regard. This matter at present is subjudice.